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TAGS: OSCE PARM PREL NATO

SUBJECT: CFE/VCC: NON-PAPER FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALLIES ON STATUS OF VCC AD HOC GROUP OF EXPERTS

REF: A. A. AC-319-DS(2008)0003

¶B. B. 08 USNATO 102

Classified By: Donna A. Phelan, Acting VCI/CCA Office Director.
Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (U) This is an action message. Mission is requested to distribute to Allies the non-paper contained in para six below.

¶2. (C/REL NATO) Background. Ref A indicates that in April 2008 the Verification Coordination Committee (VCC) tasked experts to review Vienna Document 1999 (VD 99) implementation issues in advance of the 2009 Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM). Ref B elaborates, noting that the tasking was prompted by a perception that Allies were restrained from participating in the 2008 AIAM by the lack of Allied consensus on outstanding VD 99 implementation concerns, and it was intended to better prepare Allies for discussions at the next AIAM. Between April 08 and the AIAM in March 09, experts met every month except August to discuss and coordinate positions. The results of this exercise were generally positive as evidenced by 1) detailed Allied discussions on all outstanding VD 99 implementation issues, 2) active Allied participation in the 2009 AIAM, which was notably higher than in the previous year, and 3) the introduction of two Allied-prepared and supported papers as national submissions at the AIAM. Having diligently considered the comprehensive list of issues before it, and having forwarded to Vienna those issues on which Allies found common ground, Washington believes that the ad hoc group of experts has completed its task.

¶3. (C/REL NATO) In its first meeting following the AIAM on March 6, 2009 the group of experts seemed eager to build on the process followed in 2008. The Chair invited Allied experts to identify additional issues that experts could discuss in 2009. The Chair itself suggested experts review a paper on a VD 99 implementation analysis that Russia produced for the AIAM, or reconsider the list of issues developed in April 2008. Other Allies advocated a chapter-by-chapter review of VD 99, while one Ally suggested experts look at potential implementation issues for ACFE. In the end, experts agreed that it was premature to consider future work, but the Chair asked experts to be prepared to discuss the FSC annual Survey of Suggestions (for the 2009 AIAM) at the next meeting on April 23.

¶4. (C/REL NATO) It is Washington's position that the group

of experts was established to address specific issues on a case-by-case basis as tasked by the VCC. Experts completed their most recent tasking, to review implementation of VD 99, prior to the 2009 AIAM in February.

¶ 5. (SBU) The past year's work was useful and Washington is satisfied that experts effectively identified and discussed the most significant implementation issues associated with VD ¶ 99. In addition, experts developed and assessed a number of proposals to address these issues, forwarding those having broad Alliance support to Vienna for further development. Having completed this tasking, Washington expects the group of experts to wait for further tasking from the VCC before outlining a plan for, or beginning, future work. End Background.

¶ 6. (C/REL NATO) Mission is requested to distribute the following non-paper to Allies through the IS, ACCS.

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At the March 7, 2008 VCC meeting Allies tasked experts to review Vienna Document 1999 (VD 99) implementation issues in advance of the 2009 Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM). In the months that followed, Allies developed a number of position papers, which effectively prepared Allies for discussions in Vienna. The United States recognizes the

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value of the work accomplished in the group of experts and notes with satisfaction that the group's comprehensive approach allowed Allies to participate more actively in the 2009 AIAM.

During the VCC meeting of experts on March 6, 2009, it was suggested that the group begin to consider topics that experts could address in 2009. The resulting discussion included a number of suggested tasks for experts, including, inter alia:

- conduct a chapter-by-chapter review of VD 1999 (this topic was raised by Russia at the 2009 AIAM),
- assess the Russian AIAM paper on VD 1999 implementation,
- revisit the list of topics that formed the basis for work in 2008, and
- identify and discuss potential ACFE implementation issues.

Further dialogue was postponed until the next meeting, scheduled for April 23, in the expectation that, in the interim, the FSC would publish its annual AIAM Survey of Suggestions. Experts were asked to be prepared to discuss the Survey at the next meeting with a view to identifying implementation issues for further study.

We believe that it would be useful for the VCC to discuss what should be the appropriate role of the Group of Experts in the months ahead. The United States sees the VCC as the main Allied forum for discussion of issues and reaching decisions pertaining to implementation of VD 99 and CFE. When informal coordination, specific technical expertise, and/or extended discussion are required, the VCC has the option of establishing a sub-group to deal with continuing technical issues (such as the Data Management Experts Group (DMEG)), or of calling for experts to meet on an ad hoc basis to perform such functions as allocating inspection opportunities, deconflicting inspection schedules, and evaluating specific issues. The United States supports and participates in all such meetings. However, experts respond to consensus-based taskings of the VCC. Thus, the 2008 VCC tasking to conduct a review of VD 99 implementation issues was specifically targeted at increasing the value of the 2009 AIAM. In completing their review and discussion prior to the 2009 AIAM, experts successfully closed out this tasking.

The VCC is vested by the NAC with responsibility for

coordinating and making recommendations on activities in arms control verification that have been agreed by countries as being appropriate for handling on a cooperative basis within the Alliance. When there is doubt about such agreement, the VCC may decide to seek policy guidance, primarily from the HLTF. In the view of the United States, many of the suggestions made at the last meeting of VCC experts could have broader policy implications. As such, the VCC should consider seeking policy guidance from the HLTF before deciding whether to create a new ad hoc tasking for experts.

The United States would like to raise this issue in the VCC and respectfully requests the Arms Control and Coordination Section (ACCS) to include the topic "Experts' Ad Hoc Agenda" on the VCC agenda for April 23, 2009. We would welcome a discussion in the VCC on the role of this group of experts and on potential new taskings for it from the VCC.

-----End Text-----
CLINTON